From:	Michael P. Conlon
To:	Microsoft ATR
Date:	1/23/02 10:12pm
Subject:	Opposition to proposed settlement

Sirs/Madams:

I wish to add my personal objection to the proposed settlement in the Microsoft antitrust case. Please note that, while I am a professor of computer science at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, I speak for only myself.

I hold a Ph.D. degree in computer engineering. I started activity in the computing field before there was a Microsoft. I have been involved in the personal computer field since the time when Microsoft itself started, when the only personal computers were ones you had to build yourself. I have seen Microsoft's hegemony grow, and I have seen several good, innovative companies crushed under Microsoft's monopoly.

I also have been active on the Internet since 1985, well before Microsoft discovered it. I have seen it continually grow, and with it I have seen the growth of the institutions and individuals who have used it. Unlike Microsoft and the software and protocols it has promoted, the protocols of the Internet are open and public, and this openness has been the key to its success. I am particularly concerned that an unpunished, unleashed Microsoft might be able to "proprietize" the Internet, destroying the wonderful engine of creative economic, educational, civic, and entertainment activity that it is.

The basic problem I see with the proposed settlement is that it fixes few of the real problems. It does not punish Microsoft for the evil they have done. It does not create a competitive market for operating systems. It does not create a competitive market for office applications. It allows for Microsoft to hide virtually any protocol from public knowledge on the basis of "security." (Any real security expert will tell you that the effectiveness of a security scheme must reside, not in the secrecy of the method, but in its effectiveness, so allowing Microsoft to keep these kinds of things secret will not add measurably to the security of Microsoft's systems. It will merely make it harder for others to compete.) It attempts to give some rights to specifications of network protocols to commercial enterprises, but fails to give the same rights to the public, and particularly to the people who are developing software out of love, e.g., the people developing the Linux operating system and other "open source" projects.

Here are some remedies I would suggest: 1) a large fine, (50% of their monopoly-gained cash reserves would be appropriate) payable in cash, not software, which would serve to further extend the monopoly. Give the money to schools and charities. 2) Prohibit Microsoft from restricting the installation of MS software on OEM computers in any way. Require that consumers be provided with full-featured installation disks. 3) It is now virtually impossible to purchase a computer without paying for a Microsoft operating system. This promotes monopoly. Microsoft must be prohibited from engaging in contracts with OEM's that encourage this practice. 4) Require that all network protocols and file formats, particularly Word's .doc format and Excel's .xls format, and Windows Networking authentication protocols, be

published and submitted to a recognized standards body such as ANSI, IEEE, or IETF. 5) Prohibit Microsoft from buying other software companies for ten years. 6) In lieu of the previous, since some of them might be difficult to enforce, break Microsoft into at least three operating systems companies and three applications companies, each with rights to the source code of, at least, the major products in their area. Minor products (e.g., Visio, Flight Simulator) may be parceled out.

Respectfully submitted,
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